

Lockefield Garden Apartments
900 Indiana Avenue
Indianapolis
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-194

HABS
IND,
49-IND,
32-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LOCKEFIELD GARDEN APARTMENTS

HABS No. IN-194

Location: 900 Indiana Avenue
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana
Near westside of downtown Indianapolis.
Included with the Indiana University -
Purdue University, at Indianapolis
Campus.

Present Owner: Housing Authority of the City of
Indianapolis
410 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, Indiana

Present Occupant: None

Significance:

1. The complex is being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
 - A. The nomination form was prepared July 7, 1982, after being declared eligible by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1977. A copy of the form was obtained from Robert Dinsmore, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation, State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.
2. Possible National Historic Landmark.
 - A. The complex was also to be considered for a National Landmark because of the February 4, 1977 letter from Jerry L. Rogers, Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, to Robert Garvey, Executive Director, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This letter noted that Lockefield was of at least State and possible National significance.
3. Lockefield was the center of the Negro community of Indianapolis.
 - A. Historically, the Midtown or Indiana Avenue area of Indianapolis was considered first developed by the Negroes during the late 1800's. The area served as the social, cultural and economic center of Negro activity. Lockefield, being a large part of this area, was considered the main section. The above items were indicated in the "Midtown Neighborhood Plan" dated April, 1973.

4. One of the first low-income housing projects constructed in the country by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Administration, the "New Deal", Public Works Administration, 1934.
 - A. Lockefield was part of the first involvement of the Federal Government in providing low cost housing for the poorest urban Americans. These Negro citizens lived in slum buildings which were crowded, dirty and barely able to stand.

"The Emergency Relief and Construction Act", passed in 1932 by the Federal Government, created a housing program that would provide money, through state housing boards, to construct lowcost apartments. Lockefield Garden Apartments was one of the applicants, but, at this time, only one project was funded and that was in New York called Knickerbocker Village in New York City.

"The National Industrial Recovery Act" passed in 1933, changed the program and began offering loans with some eased standards. But, this program also did not allow many applicants to qualify because of the high amount of capital needed.

In February of 1934, that program ended. In June of that year, a direct construction program was set up in which the Federal Government would itself purchase land and finance construction. Lockefield was one of the first projects approved. This program was later abandoned, but the projects started were completed using part of the original program's formulas. These 51 direct construction projects set the standards for design of public housing.
5. Lockefield Gardens' design was a model used in other housing projects, after it was displayed in the American Architect magazine in February, 1935.
 - A. The 1933 chief architectural consultant on housing to the Public Works Administration was Henry Wright. From 1933 to 1934 he was able to guide the architectural shape of subsidized public housing to reflect the European concepts of International style of Architecture. He was replaced by Alfred Fellheimer, who was more interested in getting projects underway rather than directing design. Fellheimer tried to standardize the projects so construction could move quickly.

Fellheimer was content to keep the concepts and plans Wright had started. In February 1935, he presented a series of planning standards in American Architect. These published Federal standards for housing used Lockefield Garden Apartments as an example design. He showed both before and after layouts, resulting in an improved orientation of building layouts and land use. This site plan was accepted as a standard model based on the number of similar layouts that followed.

6. To provide slum clearance.

- A. The area covered by Lockefield was considered a slum during the 1930's. The over 200 parcels of land that made the 22 acre block was pictured in the Indianapolis News Newspaper in headlines on February 24, 1937 with a caption saying "Vast Slum Clearance". The government project that produced Lockefield Garden Apartments was designed to provide clean, modern housing to replace the crowded, dirty, and structurally unsound existing housing.

Part I: Historical Information

A. Physical History:

1. Name: Lockefield Garden Apartments
(Original Plans)
2. Date of Erection: 1933 to 1936
3. Architects: William Earl Russ, Indiana
Registered Architect #120 & Merritt
Harrison, Indiana Registered
Architect #9, Indianapolis, Indiana
4. Owners:
 - a. Original - United States of America by Public
Housing, Housing Administration,
1934 to 1964. (Quit Claim Deed)
 - b. Present - Housing Authority of the City of
Indianapolis. (Quit Claim Deed)
4. Original Plans: Ink on cloth drawings.
5. Alterations: Low pitch roof added to building 1
- 8 (see attached site plan sheet
#2 for building locations).

Part II: Architectural Information

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character:

a) Four story apartments

- 1) Inspired by the concepts developed in Europe, the open style plans were created to provide an environment. This environment would substantially improve the lives of the inhabitants. The designers used the International Style of structure which provided clean lines and no ornamentation.

b) Townhouses (Rowhouses)

- 1) Located to provide small private rear yards.
- 2) Styled to match the four-story units, the townhouses were orientated in straight lines.

2. Condition:

- a. The brick-covered structures have deteriorated over the years. They have not been maintained since they were vacated in the mid 1970's.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. See photographic copies of architectural and landscape plans, plus photographics of existing exteriors.

C. Description of Interior:

1. See photographic copies of architectural plans.

2. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating supplied from the City of Indianapolis steam system, no air conditioning.
- b. Lighting - surface mounted porcelain fixtures. Power supplied by local Public Utility.
- c. Plumbing - C.I. soil lines to public sanitation system.

D. Floor Plans:

1. See photographic copies of architectural plans.

E. Site:

1. Orientation: See photographic site plan, north-south site with 748 units, 24 buildings, covering 22 acres.
2. Landscape Design: Open center courtyard, well developed trees. See photographic copies of landscape sheets.

Part III: Project Information

- A. Federal Agency: Department of Housing & Urban Development
151 North Delaware
Indianapolis, Indiana
Choice Edwards
Acting Area Manager
- B. Owner: The Housing Authority of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana
410 North Meridian
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Larry Paul
Executive Director
- C. Demolition: Partial demolition of Lockefield Gardens. Bid Date February 23, 1983. HUD Project IND 17-6.
- D. Engineer-Architect: Reid, Quebe, Allison, Wilcox & Assoc., Inc.
3901 Industrial Blvd.
Indianapolis, Indiana 46254
Max D. Boots, Architect

Part IV: Sources of Information

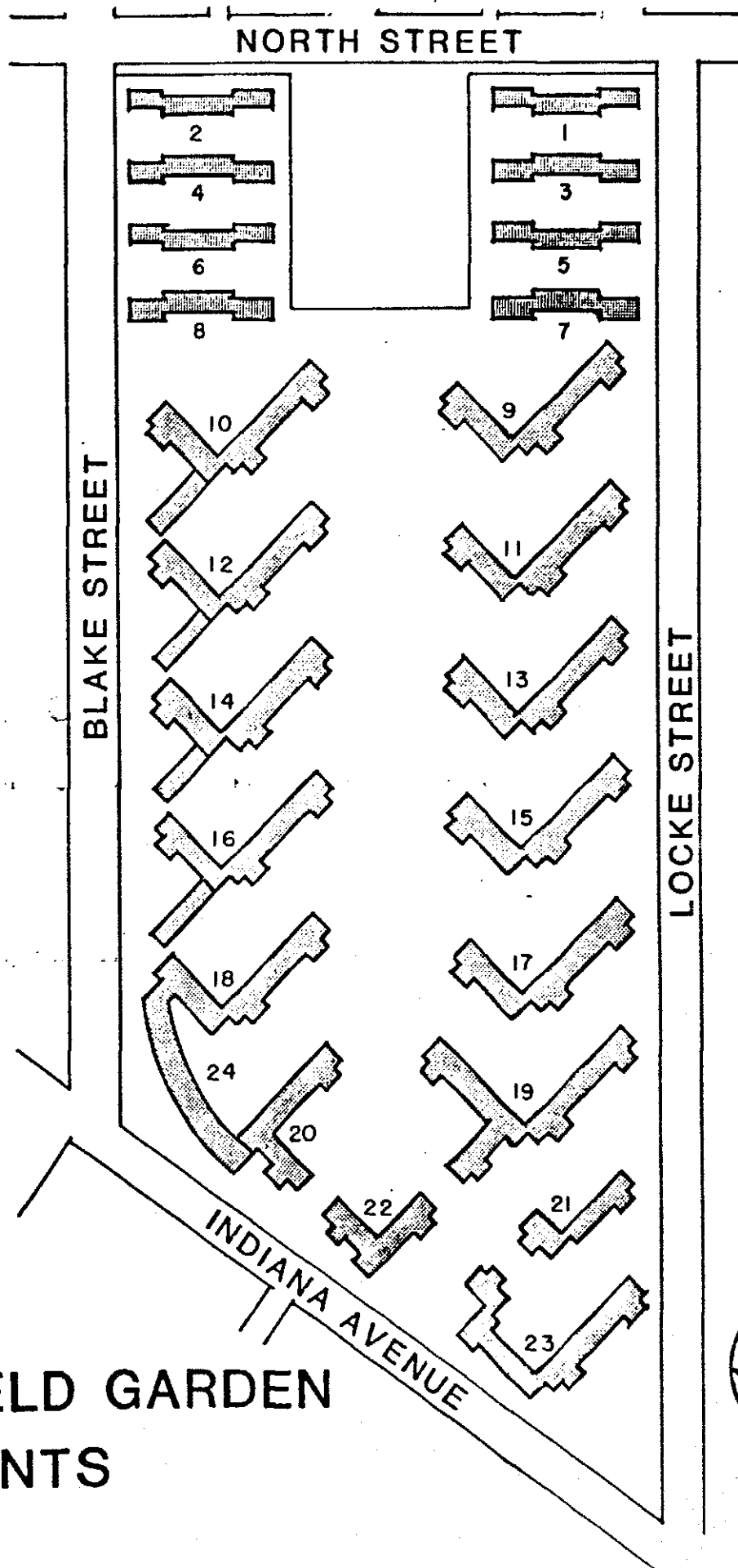
- A. Original Drawings: Complete set obtained from Housing Authority of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana.
- B. Indianapolis Star & Indianapolis News, Newspapers; Indianapolis, Indiana.

- C. Housing Authority of the City of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- D. Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- E. The Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- F. Lockefield Ledger, Indianapolis, Indiana.) Copies from Housing Authority Files and Indiana State Library).

Prepared by: Max D. Boots, Architect
James F. Smith, Architect
Robert D. West, Technician

Reid, Quebe, Allison, Wilcox & Associates, Inc.
Indianapolis, Indiana

March 4, 1983



PLAN
LOCKEFIELD GARDEN
APARTMENTS

